

REMARKS

Introduction

Claims 15-34 are pending in the present application. Of these claims, Claims 15-26, 30, and 34 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Larson et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,501,319 ("hereinafter "Larson"). Claims 27 and 39 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Larson in view of Olsson, U.S. Patent No. 6,029,797 (hereinafter "Olsson"). Further, Claims 29 and 31-33 were objected to as depending from a rejected base claim.

Claims 29 and 31-33 Have Been Rewritten in Independent Form

Claims 29 and 31-33 have been rewritten in independent form to include all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Accordingly, these claims should now be found allowable. Claims 15-26, 30, and 34 are now allowable.

Claim 15 Is Allowable as Amended

Claim 15 has been amended to further define the present invention and more clearly distinguish it from the cited art. In this regard, Claim 15 has been amended to specify that the lateral elements are connected in pairs to only two rods, a leading transverse rod and a trailing transverse rod, with the leading and trailing rods fixedly connected to the lateral elements, thereby forming a link structure having a torsionally rigid frame structure. Support for this claim amendment is located in the specification, including at page 8, lines 1-3. The foregoing claim amendment more clearly points out that the present invention presents a torsionally rigid frame structure since the two transverse rods are fixedly connected to the lateral elements. This fixedly connected arrangement of the rods allows no movement in a torsional direction, e.g., the claim structure allows no mutual displacement or turning of the two lateral elements relative to each

other. As a consequence, the load-carrying capacity of the conveyor belt of the present invention is enhanced.

On the other hand, in Larson, slots 74 are formed in connecting members 64, and slots 82 are formed in longitudinal reinforcing bar links 78 and 80, to receive transverse rods 58. These rods are provided with enlarged heads or buttons 68 to prevent the flat wire members 70 and 72 of the connecting members from sliding off the rods. By this arrangement the transverse rods 58 are not fixedly arranged or attached to the connecting members; rather, in Larson, the conveyor structure requires the slot 74 and 82 to allow the belt 52 to curve to the left, as shown in Figure 2. Without such slots, the belt could not curve in this manner. Thus, the Larson structure does not define a torsionally rigid frame structure as now specified in the present invention.

Claim 15 as amended also specifies that adjoining first and second link structures are articulated to each other by a coupling element that is arranged therebetween and turnably connected to a trailing rod of a first link structure and a leading rod of an adjoining second link structure. Support for this claim amendment is found in the specification, including at page 9, lines 9-17.

Unlike the foregoing amendment to Claim 15, in Larson, all rods 58 are indiscriminately slidable and turnable in relationship to the load-carrying elements, e.g., flat wire members 70 and 72. However, in Claim 15 as amended, certain of the rods are distinctly fixed in pairs to form torsionally rigid frame structures, as discussed above, while also being turnably connected to coupling elements allowing the conveyor belt to turn in the desired manner. This structure is not disclosed nor suggested in Larson.

Based on the foregoing amendments and remarks, applicants respectfully submit that Claim 15, as amended, is in condition for allowance.

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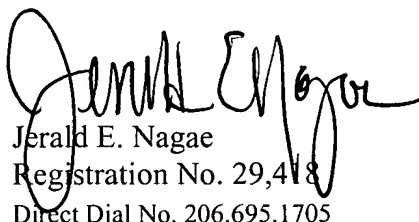
Subclaims 16-28 depend directly or indirectly from Claim 15. Accordingly, such subclaims also should now be found allowable.

Conclusion

With the foregoing amendments and remarks, applicants respectfully submit that all the pending claims in the present application are now in condition for allowance. If the Examiner has any questions concerning the foregoing, he is request to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,

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